

Mega-Collection of Famous Copywriting Quotes

Quotes by Gary Halbert, Jay Abraham, Eugene Schwartz, Claude Hopkins, Dan Kennedy, Bob Bly, David Ogilvy, Robert Collier, John Caples, Ted Nicholas, Joe Sugarman, and more!

By Kelly Harrison of
www.BeachMusicReporter.com



“A” PILE VS. “B” PILE

Everybody in the world divides his mail into two piles which I call the A-pile and the B-pile. The A-pile contains letters that are, (or appear to be), personal. The B-pile contains everything else: bills, catalogs, brochures, printed announcements, envelopes, that obviously contain a sales message and so on.—Gary Halbert

The most important thing you can ever do when creating a direct mail promotion is to make sure your letter gets in the A-pile!—Gary Halbert

A pile envelopes always look personal, from one real person to another real person. The best (most cost-effective) A-pile envelopes always have a live postage stamp affixed. They never have teaser copy. They are never addressed by label and they are seldom oversized or odd shaped.—Gary Halbert

Your mailing has to be startling enough to interrupt the day’s normal routine and the person’s self-conversation. What’s more, it has to keep on interrupting until the order device is acted upon them and there. If the mailing is laid aside, chances are it won’t be picked up and reconsidered, and the sale will be loss.—Gary Halbert

ADVERTISING

Advertising is salesmanship in print.—John E. Kennedy

The only point at all of any kind of marketing—is selling your product or service. Nothing else matters.—Jeffrey Lant

The only purpose of advertising is to sell; it has no other justification worth mentioning.—Raymond Rubicam

Business is the act of extracting money from another man’s pocket without resorting to violence.—Max Amsterdam

Kodak sells film, but they don’t advertise film, they advertise memories.—Theodore Levitt

Marketing is too important to leave to the marketing department.—David Packard

A sales letter is a sales presentation in print.—Dan Kennedy

The striving to “attract attention” instead of striving to positively sell goods is the basis of all advertising misunderstanding.—John E. Kennedy

Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.—Mark Twain

Salesmanship in print, a definition that has never been improved.—David Ogilvy

Businesses that know how to market are always more successful than those that don’t.—Jay Levinson, Seth Godin

An advertisement cannot inflect its voice, cannot gesture, cannot roll its eyes, cannot burst into tears. The tricks that speakers use to sway an audience are not transferable to the printed page.—Richard Hodgson

News is what someone somewhere didn't want you to print. The rest is advertising.—William Randolph Hearst

Advertising is “the lubricant” for the free enterprise system.—Leo-Arthur Kelmenson

The business that considers itself immune to the necessity of advertising sooner or later finds itself immune to business.—Derby Brown

The company with a good product that does not advertise is like a man who whispers to himself in the desert.—Robert Collier

Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.—Mark Twain

The purpose of advertising is to increase the exposure of our business beyond what is provided by your physical location. The business owner who saves money by investing in a weak location will have to advertise more heavily. A high cost of occupancy for a landmark location is often the least expensive advertising your money can buy.—Roy Williams

ASK FOR THE ORDER

People send money because you ask them to.—Mel Warwick

An advertisement that is trying to sell, and then doesn't ask for the business is worse than a salesman who forgets to try a close.—Clyde Bedell

To get people to reach into their pockets and exchange their hard-earned dollars for your product is not a natural act.—Joe Sugarman

If they wait five minutes before they go to the phone, you have a chance of losing that customer—John Carlson

BACK END

The proof of the pudding is not in the testing, but whether or not people return for a second helping.—Jerry Wilson

In every business it is an axiom that the first sales is the hardest. It is like the first olive out of the bottle, or a maid's first kiss—after it, the rest comes easily—Robert Collier

All mail order is dependent upon the second sale. Nobody really makes money on the first sale.—Eugene Schwartz

Making a sale to someone who has already bought from you is far more profitable than trying to make a sale from someone who has never bought from you.—Carl Galletti

I can't remember a single instance in which a special discount to customers as compared to outsiders didn't increase response by more than the discount.—Dick Benson

BELIEF IN THE PRODUCT

Good copy can't be written with tongue in cheek, written just for a living. You've got to believe in the product.—David Ogilvy

Passion is simply emotional gasoline.—Roy Williams

BONUSES

Surprise is the foundation of delight and the beginning of persuasion.—Roy Williams

Dollar for dollar, premiums are better incentives than cash discounts.—Dick Benson

Adding elements to a mailing package, even though obviously adding cost, is more likely to pay out than cheapening the product.—Dick Benson

BORROWING IDEAS

People seldom improve when they have no model but themselves to copy.—Oliver Goldsmith

We are all imitators. We all get many of our ideas from others.—Robert Collier

BRAND NAMES

Over 60 percent of American consumers say that brand names are the best way to determine the quality of a product. This means that they are certain their favorite brand-name product is the highest quality product available.—Britt Beemer

BUZZ

The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.—Oscar Wilde

Coining a great new phrase is one of the first things you should do, because putting the word out is just that.—Richard Laermer

CAPTURING NAMES

The best message in the world is useless if it falls on deaf ears.—Joe Polish

COMPETITION

They (other printers) aren't really my competition—my competition is complacency.—Derek Freund

CONSISTENCY

When people are perceived as inconsistent, our trust and respect for them decreases markedly.—Kevin Hogan

The drive to be (and look) consistent constitutes a highly potent weapon of social influence, often causing us to act in ways that are clearly contrary to our own best interests.—Robert Cialdini

COPYWRITING

The better and more sophisticated the manipulation the less aware of it we are.—Douglas Rushkoff

Genius is the art of taking pains. The advertising man who spares the midnight oil will never get very far.—Claude Hopkins

Whenever you start to create a mailing, sales literature, or an ad, remember that all of the copy should initially be written by one person not by a group of collaborators.—Rene Gnam

A copywriter is the best of writers, he is practical businessman, he is a temperamental artist, he is a bearer of benefits, he is the apostle, of greed, he is inspired craftsman, he's a frustrated hack.—Hanley Norins

I have seen one mail-order advertisement actually sell, not twice as much, not three times as much, but 19 ½ times as much merchandise as another ad for the same product. Both advertisements occupied the same space. Both were run in the same publication. Both had photographic illustrations. Both had carefully written copy. The difference was that one used the real appeal and the other used the wrong appeal.—John Caples

Most business people have fabulous ideas, they simply don't have the words.—Roy Williams

The difference between a one dollar bill and a one hundred dollar bill is the message on the paper.—Joe Polish

DAMAGING ADMISSION

When you admit to (and describe) your shortcomings it makes you more believable when you talk up the good points, doesn't it?—Gary Halbert

The fact that a product has flaws is wonderful. Don't knock it. It's like a human being. Do you like someone who is perfect? You don't. You actually rather dislike him. Do you like somebody who comes into a room and starts knocking somebody else. Not really. Frailty is a wonderful thing in human beings. I love somebody who comes into a room and makes a joke about themselves. They seem like an interesting person, they seem confident.—John Hegarty

Always convert a disadvantage into an advantage.—Elsworth Howell

By presenting a negative feature up front, you melt that initial resistance and come across as honest rather than deceptive. The trust and respect you get from prospects will lower their defense mechanism, and so they'll be prepared to receive the real advantages of your product or service.—Joe Sugarman

Tell your prospective clients what your weak points are, before he notices them. This will make you more credible when you boast about your strong points.—David Ogilvy

Truthfully admit your problem, then tie it to the offer.—Jay Abraham

That one apparent “weak point” made every other point in my letter believable.—Joe Vitale

They may know little of grammar, nothing of rhetoric, but they know how to use words that convince.—Claude Hopkins

DIRECT MAIL

When you send out 20,000 letters, you are deploying in effect, 20,000 indefatigable salespeople working for you every day, going into people’s homes or offices and making the most perfect sales pitch, without flinching, without missing any components, making the best case countering every objection and delivering the perfect closes—for literally pennies on the dollar, opposed to the \$40 or \$50 it would cost you for a salesperson to call and meet in person with a potential customer.—Jay Abraham

Unfortunately, retailers don’t sell. The point: Of all practical advertising media, only direct mail offers a sufficiently large canvas for telling a complex story.—David Oreck

As direct marketers we’re not here primarily to make a sale; we’re here to get a customer.—Joan Throckmorton

Unlike broadcast or space advertising, which becomes public knowledge once the ad goes on the air or the publication hits the stands, direct mail is unseen by anyone except the sender and the reader.—Denny Hatch

Theater in print!—George Duncan

The practitioners of direct mail can measure their results to a penny. The practitioners of ordinary advertising can hardly measure their results at all.—David Ogilvy

Direct marketing is the most measurable, and arguably the most effective, type of marketing in the world.—Robert Bly

DUMBING DOWN

Don’t overestimate the knowledge of your audience or underestimate their intelligence. In other words don’t “write down” to your readers, but assume they don’t know your product or service as well as you do.—Richard Hodgson

EFFORT

There are only three things that you can spend. You can spend time, you can spend money, or you can spend energy. Those are the three things that you’ve got to work with in order to build your business. So many people waste time, waste money, waste energy

doing a lot of manual marketing, throwing punches that don't have any impact.—Joe Polish

EMOTIONAL VS. LOGICAL REASONING

Give people a logical excuse for buying that they can tell their friends and use to salve their own consciences. But if you want to sell goods, if you want action of any kind, base your real urge upon some primary emotion.—Robert Collier

If we can provide potential customer with compelling reasons and sound evidence that they are making the right choice, it becomes much easier for them to pull the trigger on that decision.—Mark Joyner

Anyone who thinks you need a rational benefit is ignoring ninety percent of the human psyche which is irrational.—Neil French

An ounce of emotion is equal to a ton of facts.—John Junor

You don't buy coal, you buy heat
You don't buy circus tickets, you buy thrills
You don't buy a paper, you buy news
You don't buy spectacles, you buy vision—Anonymous

Ads for a product are read ten times as much by people who own the product. People want to be constantly reinforced that the decision to spend the money was a wise one.—Murray Raphael and Neil Raphael

Human nature hasn't changed for a billion years. It won't even vary in the next billion years. Only the superficial things have changed. It is fashionable to talk about changing man. A communicator must be concerned with unchanging man—what compulsions drive him, what instincts dominate his every action, even though his language too often camouflages what really motivates him. For if you know these things about a man, you can touch him at the core of his being.—Bill Bernbach

People are logical and emotional. You have to provide both to capture their loyalty.—Joe Vitale

You can say the right thing about a product and nobody will listen. You've got to say it in such a way that people will feel it in their gut. Because if they don't feel it, nothing will happen.—Bill Bernbach

They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.—Carl W. Buechner

If customers were totally rational, advertising wouldn't work.—Seth Godin

People want to do business with a person not a company.—Joe Polish

EXTRA MILE

The things that we do that are above the normality are the things that distinguish us.—Jay Abraham

FOCUS

It takes the same energy to light a light bulb as it does for a laser to cut through steel—the latter is simply more focused.—Colin Turner

You can never sell two things at once.—Dick Benson

Offers of subscriptions using two terms (i.e. eight months, 16 months) will pull more money...but 10% fewer orders.—Dick Benson

FOLLOW-UP MAILINGS

A follow-up mailing dropped two weeks after the first mailing will pull 50% of the original response.—Dick Benson

FORGETTING RULES OF GRAMMAR

When writing direct mail sales letters, you're not writing to get an "A" in an English class. There are times when following the pure rules of English grammar actually get in the way of communicating. You shouldn't purposely violate the rules of good grammar, but they shouldn't be allowed to get in the way of easy communication.—Richard Hodgson

A sentence expresses a single thought. Sometimes a thought can be expressed in just one word. One. And that's enough.—Mal Warwick

Spoken language is the primary phenomenon, and writing is only a more or less imperfect reflection of it.—E. H. Sturtevant

Don't worry about ending sentences with prepositions. Sometimes a preposition is the very best word to end a sentence with.—Mal Warwick.

It is well to remember that grammar is common speech formulated. Usage is the only test. I would prefer a phrase that was easy and unaffected to a phrase that was grammatical.—W. Somerset Maugham

Most writing today does not contain enough clichés!—Gary Halbert

Lawyers, top business executives, and even some journalists advocate the sparing use of contractions. Don't pay any attention to them if you want your readers to take action.—Mal Warwick

Forget rules of grammar when writing copy.—Ted Nicholas

And it's okay to start a sentence with a conjunction. (But don't overdo it. Two sentences in a row that start with "but" are likely to confuse the reader.)—Mal Warwick

GETTING ATTENTION

Do not underestimate the fierce competition you face in getting attention—Victor Schwab

Getting and keeping the customer's attention must come first, and all else follows.—Mark Joyner

An advertisement cannot stimulate sales if it is not read, it cannot be read if it is not seen; and it will not be seen unless it gets attention.—Victor Schwab

If you don't get noticed, you don't have anything. You just have to be noticed, but the art is in getting noticed naturally, without screaming or without tricks—Leo Burnett

If your advertising goes unnoticed, everything else is academic.—Bill Bernbach

Marketing radar is a defense mechanism or coping strategy that helps us screen out the 1,500 commercial messages we are exposed to every day.—Jonathan Bond & Richard Kirshenbaum

In an era of too much noise and too much clutter and too many choices and too many channels and too much spam, you can't make a good living by interrupting people over and over.—Seth Godin

Just because you have money doesn't mean you can trade it for attention by buying advertising. Consumers have learned how to ignore you.—Seth Godin

We have to find even more remarkable ways to stop people. They can already hide from us like never before. They can zap us into oblivion.—Susan Gillette

GETTING TO THE POINT

Once you've decided what you want to say come right out and say it. Mumbler's command less attention than people who speak up.—Kenneth Roman & Joel Raphaelson

When you say something, make sure you have said it.—E.B. White

If you want to make sure people read something on a page, put it in a box.—Robert Bly

The best marketing goes for the jugular, hits the prospect's supreme aspiration or anxiety. Hits it hard and hits it immediately. And the key word here is immediately.—Jeffrey Lant

If you can't write your message in a sentence, you can't say it in an hour.—Dianna Booher

The risk of insult is the price of clarity.—Roy Williams

GRAPHICS

Neatness rejects involvement.—Lewis M. Smith

Clutter invites involvement.—Denny Hatch

Large letter and lots of color in your direct mail package are perceived as shouting. Some of the best mail comes across like a one-on-one conversation—instead of shouting like a town crier.—Ted Kikoler

You'd be surprised how long a control can be kept alive with simple cosmetic changes. That's because we have a harder time remembering what we have read than what we have seen.—Ted Kikoler

Create the illusion of lower quality in your mailing and your response will go up.—Ted Kikoler

A homely, even ugly, appearance will many times beat a flashy look. It appears more sincere.—Ted Kikoler

GUARANTEE

The best things in life are postage-paid, batteries included, guaranteed forever and tax-free.—Jacqueline Schiff

If you want to be the best, you have to separate yourself from all the talk about quality. And put it in writing.—Lee Iacocca

One of the things you don't want to do is have your attorney write a guarantee. It needs to be written by the marketing people. Make it simple, easy to understand with short words.—Ray Jutkins

When all else is the same, he who has the strongest guarantee wins.—Joe Polish

If you have a guarantee but don't promote it, you've got the liability of a guarantee, but no value out of it. Competency begins with guarantees.—Joe Polish

HANDLING UNSPOKEN OBJECTIONS

Our sales letter does not have the luxury of responding only to the objections each recipient thinks of. The letter has to respond to every possible objection. Our letter does not get any feedback, making it clear when "enough is enough," so it must do more than enough.—Dan Kennedy

You can't just resolve an objection without first raising it.—Joe Sugarman

One of the most important strategies for the advertising copywriter to remember is overcoming unspoken objections.—Maxwell Sackheim

HAVING AN INTERESTING MESSAGE

Unless your advertising contains a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night—David Ogilvy

I don't care if you are marketing Hostess Twinkies, garden hoses, industrial widgets, or any one of a zillion commodities or services that you and everyone you know has accepted as mundane, maybe even trivial—there is a way, and you must find it, to present that message in a truly interesting way.—Dan Kennedy

A middle of the road wimpy, wishy-washy publication that tries to please everyone doesn't have a chance in the marketplace.—Ted Nicholas

You can have the world's best product or service, but if you can't communicate your ideas, you have nothing.—Joe Sugarman

Ads are not written to entertain.—Claude Hopkins

You can't bore someone into buying your product—David Ogilvy

The secret of business is to know something no one else knows.—Aristotle Onassis

The cost of an ad is the same no matter what words you put in. But the words you put in can have a dramatic effect on the results.—Carl Galletti

Platitudes and generalities roll off the human understanding like water from a duck. They leave no impression whatever. They lead readers to discount all the statements that you make.—Claude Hopkins

The media assumes the public is easily bored.—Michael Levine

You can't teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself.—Galileo

A good ad should be like a good sermon: It must not only comfort the afflicted, it also must afflict the comfortable.—Bernard Fitz-Gibbon

There is just one reason why anyone ever reads a letter you send him. He expects a reward.—Robert Collier

HEADLINES

Don't think that those millions will read your ads to find out if your product interests. They will decide by a glance—by your headline or your pictures.—Claude Hopkins

There are two principle attributes of headlines. They select from the total readership of the publication, those readers who are (or can be induced to be) interested in the subject of the advertisement. And they promise them a worthwhile reward for reading it.—
Victor Schwab

You can make an ad pull unless you can make people read your copy—John Caples

Headlines not only sell newspapers—and move readers straight through the contents and advertising—but also may subliminally convince thousands of “headline readers.”—
Barbara Ellis

On the average, five times as many people read the headlines as read the body copy. It follows that unless your headline sells your product, you have wasted 90 percent of your money—David Ogilvy

The eyes is a creature of habit. And the eye has read more newspapers than any other written material.—David Ogilvy

And for letters it has read more typewritten letters than typeset letters. Why? So your readers won't notice the type.—Carl Galletti

Don't ever run an ad without a headline—Jay Abraham

Without publicity a terrible thing happens. Nothing!—P.T. Barnum

Headlines can be strengthened by the inclusion of emotional words like: Darling, Love, Fear, Proud, Friend, and Baby.—David Ogilvy

The headline is the ad for the ad.—Murray Raphel

To read a metropolitan newspaper completely through requires at least fourteen hours—and a study made for the Association of National Advertisers cites a survey demonstrating that over 66% of a large group of business and professional men spent 15 minutes of less in reading daily newspapers.—George B. Hotchkiss

What decides whether or not you stop a moment and look at an advertisement, or even read a little of it? The headline!—John Caples

There isn't much difference between the top-notch copywriters except for their ability or skill in creating headlines.—Maxwell Sackheim

HERD MENTALITY

We will use the actions of others to decide on proper behavior for ourselves, especially when we view those others as similar to ourselves—Robert Cialdini

We tend to think that if something is not true it would somehow be challenged. If it is repeated constantly and not challenged, our minds seem to regard this as prima facie evidence that perhaps is true. We don't go out of our way to think about it because of low involvement, by definition means that we don't care much anyway.—Max Sutherland & Alice Sylvester

Humans like cattle, tend to move in herds.—Mark Joyner

It's up to you to define the existence of the herd and show it to your prospect. Not only will seeing your herd increase the likeliness that your prospects will do business with you, but it will also increase their satisfaction after the purchase as well.—Mark Joyner

When people are uncertain, they look to the actions of others to guide their own actions.—Robert Cialdini

When one person starts applauding at a concert, the natural urge to applaud with him is nearly unstoppable.—Kevin Hogan

We seem to assume that if a lot of people are doing the same thing, they must know something that we don't. Especially when we are uncertain, we are willing to place an enormous amount of trust in the collective knowledge of the crowd.—Robert Cialdini

IDEAS

An idea is nothing more nor less than a new combination of old elements.—James Webb Young

Every product has a nature to it that you must understand to be successful when creating a marketing concept behind that product.—Joe Sugarman

Ideas form the foundations of all fortunes, the starting point of all inventions.—Napoleon Hill

Money never starts an idea; it is the idea that starts the money.—W.J. Cameron

Imagination is one of the last remaining legal means you have to gain an unfair advantage over your competition.—Pat Fallon

INSTALLMENT PAYMENTS

The offer of installment payments increases orders.—Dick Benson

INTANGIBLES

Intangibles are the most honest merchandise anyone can sell. They are always worth whatever you are willing to pay for them and they never wear out. You can take them to your grave untarnished.—Lazarus Long

JUNK MAIL

The term *junk mail* was coined by the newspaper industry as a result of losing advertising revenue to direct mail.—Denny Hatch

Turn your “junk mail” into gold by analyzing promotional and marketing techniques at work.—David Deutsch

When a consumer sees printed material, for example that looks like an advertising circular, they are “cued” to toss it in the trash.—Mark Joyner

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Watch out for complicated offers. Try to keep the commitment as simple as possible. If at all possible, keep everything to a basic yes-or-no decision.—Richard Hodgson

KNOWING YOUR PROSPECT

You can only succeed to the extent that you understand precisely what bothers your prospect, and precisely what that prospect wants to achieve.—Brian Keith Voiles

All knowledge is merely answers to questions—Brian Tracy

The most essential ingredient you must have to make a ton of moola? A reachable pool of people who are starving to spend their money on some particular thing.—Gary Halbert

The best prospects for direct marketing promotions are those who are proven mail order buyers. Look for list of prospects who have bought a product similar to yours, at a similar price.—Robert Bly

LISTS

The list is the weakest spot in many direct mail programs because it is taken for granted.—John Yeck

If you mail to the wrong list you’re going to flop—Gary Halbert

Lists are the most important ingredient to the success of a promotional mailing.—Dick Benson

LOOK OF TYPEWRITTEN COPY

Don’t let the repairman keep your (copy) machine in too good shape. If your letter is perfect it defeats the personal touch you want to create. Try to make your automatic letters look as though Sadie the Steno labored over them. If your machine is perfect you will help your cause by slipping a small error in somewhere. People make mistakes and personal letters should look as though they came from people.—Paul Bringe

Letters between people are either handwritten or typed (never typeset, which is reserved for mass, not personal communications) and because handwriting is difficult to read.—Denny Hatch

Use Courier typeface in letters. Some call it old fashioned, but my experience shows that Courier outpulls any other type style. The typewriter “me to you” look “feels” more personal and urgent.—Ted Nicholas

Italics enhance the reader’s understanding—when used sparingly—Mal Warwick

LONG COPY

When you get the letter in the hands of the intended recipients, they’ve got the complete message, from beginning to end. Every question answered, every issue addressed, every problem solved, every reservation overcome, every application made, and every call to action expressed.—Jay Abraham

But, you say, no one will read long copy. And you’re right, no one will—unless he’s interested...unless it has his name on it. Then he’ll read every word. And that’s the only guy you want to read your copy.—Joe Karbo

Copy should be whatever length it takes to do a complete selling job. No longer, no shorter.—Bob Serling

The more informative your advertising, the more persuasive it will be.—David Ogilvy

Customers prefer seduction to rape. As annoying as this may be to the seller, acknowledging the preference is wise.—Big Bill Williams

Word-for-word, newsletters are among the most expensive products in the world, and when you are asking for \$39 to \$99—cash with order—long copy is necessary.—Bill Bonner

Every advertisement should be a complete sales pitch for your product.—David Ogilvy

You are like a salesman in a busy man’s office. You have been trying to get in for several years. You will never be admitted again. This is your one chance to get his order. If you only show half your sales story, you are a dope.—David Ogilvy

Copy can never be too long. Just too boring!—Ted Nicholas

In split run tests, long copy invariably outsells short copy.—David Ogilvy

If you don’t give your prospects enough information they simply won’t make the purchase.—Nick Osborne

People who are not interested in your product or service don’t want to know anything about it but, those who are interested, want to know everything about it.—Gary Halbert

Things are not long or short; they’re either interesting or uninteresting.—Joe Polish

Long Copy is better than short copy—Dick Benson

MAIL ORDER BUSINESS

Most people who want to be in the mail order business couldn't make it even if the postage was free!—Gary Halbert

MAKE A BIG PROMISE

Promise, large promise is the soul of advertising—Samuel Johnson

Small plans do not inflame the hearts of men.—Napoleon

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships renew better than plain subscriptions by 10% or more.—Dick Benson

NAME

Nothing in marketing can succeed unless the name is right. The best company, the best packaging, and the best marketing in the world won't work if the name is wrong.—Al Ries & Laura Ries

A good name has story value. It suggests an idea reporters can explore.—Al Ries & Laura Ries

OPTIONS

Although you would expect that offering your customers lots of choices will pull more orders, the opposite is usually true: Offering too many response options can actually depress response. The simpler your offer is and the easier it is to understand, the better the response.—Robert Bly

OFFER

Give the reader a chance to make a deal with you—not tomorrow or next week, but right away.—Maxwell Sackheim

People don't live the way they do because they like it. They live the way they do because they don't know what else to do.—Vernon Howard

Only the hungriest fish are going to snap at the crapiest bait.—Joe Polish

The offer is the second most important ingredient of direct mail.—Dick Benson

ORGANIZATION

The best preventative medicine for business problems and personal stress is preparation and organization. The best anecdote is action.

OVERCOMING INERTIA

People are dilatory, they defer action and then forget. Many an advertiser loses in that way most of his half-made converts. One cannot afford that.—Claude Hopkins

Discontent by itself does not invariably create a desire for change. Other factors have to be present before discontent turns into disaffection.—Eric Hoffer

It is a truism that many who join a rising revolutionary movement are attracted by the prospect of sudden and spectacular change in the conditions of their life.—Eric Hoffer

PACKAGE

Every part of the package is designed to tell a piece of the story. No one thing should tell the whole story.—Malcolm Decker

The direct mail package—especially a full-dress package—is a sales team.—Malcolm Decker

PASSING PARADE

There are patterns in people's lives. Your appeal is most likely to bear fruit if it fits squarely into one of those patterns.—Mal Warwick

The people we're trying to influence don't run on tracks.—Herschell Gordon Lewis

You can't advertise today and quit tomorrow. You're not talking to a mass meeting. You're talking to a parade.—Bruce Barton

It seems an idea means nothing to us until we're ready for it.—Earl Nightingale

Unless a product becomes outmoded, a great campaign will not wear itself out.—Rosser Reaves

PERCEPTION

In today's marketplace, a customer's perception of a store's survivability is a determining factor in deciding where to shop, particularly when purchasing a product that requires servicing after the sale.—Britt Beemer

PREDICTABILITY

An over-reliance on consistency has been the death of countless unimaginative, innovation-free businesses. Predictability will hurt your relationship with customers too. When they see marketing approaches that are never changing, they will simply tune you out.—Mark Joyner

Ideas that are predictable don't get noticed. You can't sell anything to anyone unless they notice you. To get a boring ad noticed, you've got to run it lots and lots of times. If you've got a really original message, you only need to run it a few times. People retain the message longer and it cost the client less.—Bob Isherwood

If you can provide me with a "Really, I didn't know that" response, I'll be sure to cover it. All others must stand in line—Barbara Pepe

Psychology is the science of predicting how people behave—and explaining why they don't.—Anonymous

People are the same everywhere; we respond to fear, greed, sex, premiums, and low prices whether in Sioux City or Salzburg or Sorrento or Singapore or Sydney.—Denny Hatch

Words are electric, they should be chosen for the emotional voltage they carry. Weak and predictable words cause grand ideas to appear so dull that they fade into the darkness of oblivion. But powerful words in unusual combinations brightly illuminate the mind.—Roy Williams

There's no relationship between being good and getting paid.—Tim Paulson

PREEMPTIVE ADVANTAGE

The first person to tell the public something, even something that every other competitor is doing, if the public doesn't know anything about it. It sounds like a profound revelation. Just tell them the things you do for them, even if it's things that you and every other competitor take for granted. The public doesn't take it for granted, and they'll think you're the first to do it for them.—Jay Abraham

There's nothing wrong with jumping on the bandwagon—as long as you're the first to do it.—Don Hauptman

PRICING

You can sell a map to a buried treasure to a treasure hunter for \$100 and he doesn't say, "Hey that piece of paper only costs two cents. Where do you get off asking for a hundred dollars?" Treasure maps, not toothbrushes.—Jeff Paul

We are not here to sell boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.—Samuel Johnson

Copy cannot create desire for a product. It can only take the hopes, dreams, fears, and desires that already exist in the hearts of millions of people and focus those already existing desires onto a particular product.—Eugene Schwartz

Unlike an electric light bulb, the value of a candle has no relationship to its light output.—Al Ries & Laura Ries

One cannot change the size or quantity of anything without changing its quality.—P. Valery

At the counter of success there are never any bargains, you always have to pay full price in advance.—Brian Tracy

If you think hiring a pro is expensive, go ahead and try hiring an amateur.—Red Adair

The good life is expensive. There is another way to live that does not cost as much, but it isn't any good.—Spanish Distiller

If you're not willing to charge for your intangible services and the value you provide, most people don't respect them and they don't appreciate them and they don't really utilize them. Use to give free advice to people and no one acted on them. When I started charging people \$3,000 an hour, everybody acted on them, because they saw in the investment value and a necessity to get a result or reward to justify the commitment.—Jay Abraham

There is no victory at bargain basement prices.—Dwight Eisenhower

It is hard to pay for an article which has once been free. It is like paying railroad fare after traveling on a pass.—Claude Hopkins

Value: The difference between the anticipated price and the marked price. If the marked price is lower than the anticipated price the value is good. If the marked price is higher than the anticipated price, the value is perceived as poor. (There is no profit in lowering the marked price; you must raise the anticipated price!)—Roy Williams

If everybody bought by price, everybody would drive the cheapest car, they'd wear the cheapest clothes, they'd eat in the cheapest restaurants, and they'd have the cheapest things.—Joe Polish

The secret to eliminate price resistance is to compare apples to oranges.—Dan Kennedy

“Department store” pricing always pays except for membership offers—Dick Benson

The same product sold at different prices will result in the same net income per thousand mailed—Dick Benson

PROOFREADING

The quality of your proofreading will be remembered long after your speed has been forgotten.—Earl Nightingale

REASON WHY

Whenever you can present a believable reason for a special offer, response will be increased above and beyond that to be expected by the deal itself.—Dick Benson

RELATIONSHIPS

Don't assume you can keep relationships alive without attention.—Jay Abraham

REPEATABLE SUCCESS

One of the greatest wastes in advertising is to do away with copy that's still working.—
David Ogilvy

ROUTINE

Routine brings results. A disorganized genius is no match for the average person with a daily routine.

SCARCITY

A piece of information is more persuasive if we think we can't get it elsewhere.—Robert Cialdini

When our freedom to have something is limited, the item becomes less available, and we experience an increased desire for it. However, we rarely recognize that psychological reactance has caused us to want the item more; all we know is that we want it.—Robert Cialdini

Opposite-sex individuals look better near closing time because the chances to meet them are rapidly dwindling.—Robert Cialdini

Things that are difficult to possess are typically better than those that are easy to possess, we can often use an item's availability to help us quickly and correctly decide on its quality.—Robert Cialdini

Make your reader feel that this is his last chance—keep your penalty dangling before his mind's eye, the money-saving lost, the opportunity missed. Put into your close the fear of consequences.—Robert Collier

SECRETS

Nearly everybody loves secrets. When you share secrets with people, you gain a great deal of trust from your listeners.—Kevin Hogan

The intriguing thing about the effects of censoring information is not that the audience members want to have the information more than they did before; that seems natural. Rather it is that they come to believe the information more, even though they haven't received it.—Robert Cialdini

The first thing is to find out everything everybody else knows, and start where they left off.—Thomas Edison

A thing that is bought or sold has no value unless it contains that which cannot be bought or sold. Look for the "priceless ingredient."—Robert Collier

In order to be effective a doctrine must not be understood, but has rather to be believed in. We can be absolutely certain only about things we do not understand.—Eric Hoffer

The secret of business is to know something that nobody else knows.—Aristotle Onassis

“I’ve got a secret” is one of the most powerful of all positioning statements.—Dan Kennedy

If everybody knows everything about your business, you’ll often wind up with no business!—Dan Kennedy

SELLING

Everyone lives by selling something.—Robert Louis Stevenson

Persuasion is the ability to induce beliefs and values in other people by influencing their thoughts and actions through specific strategies.—Kevin Hogan

SELLING AGAINST AN ENEMY

Every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority.—Thomas Huxley

To share a common hatred, with an enemy even, is to infect him with a feeling of kinship, and thus sap his powers of resistance.—Eric Hoffer

The genius of a great leader consists in concentrating all hatred on a single foe.—Eric Hoffer

Hatred is the most accessible and comprehensive of all unifying agents.—Eric Hoffer

It is easier to hate an enemy with much good in him than one who is all bad.—Eric Hoffer

SIGNATURE

Don’t overlook the color, size, and vitality of your signature. They’re your salesman’s handshake. Even people who aren’t graphologists pick up a lot from the way your name is signed.—Malcolm Decker

Make the signature used in a sales letter clear and bold. Use a fine felt tip pen for the original and always print the signature in reflex blue. Prospects look at the signature and respond less well to a “wimpy” appearance, which suggests uncertainty or lack of confidence.—Ted Nicholas

SPECIALIZATION

I recommend you specialize in one particular area and become well-known for your expertise in that field.—Melvin Powers

Specifics Sell—Non specifics Don’t. The writer who substitutes generalities for specifics has a real problem.—Herschell Gordon Lewis

The more specific the words, the more the writer controls emotions.—Herschell Gordon Lewis

Brain surgeons earn 10 times that of a general practitioner—it pays to be an expert.—Allan Pease

Use a rifle, not a shotgun—target a few key points and hit them dead center.—Ralph Archibald

No generality has any weight whatsoever. It is like saying, “How do you do?” when you have no intentions of inquiring about one’s health.—Claude Hopkins

STORY TELLING

From the time each of us was a child, we’ve loved a good story. Tell one in advertising and people will read your message and love your product.—David Martin

We’re magnetically drawn to stories with uncertain conclusions. You begin telling a story that attracts a potential customer’s attention, and make him keep following you in search of a satisfying conclusion. An unfinished story can be one of your greatest assets.—Mark Joyner

Human interest makes for easier reading. Scientific tests have shown that people are better at reading about other people than about anything else.—Rudolph Flesch

When you create a story and people it with characters you create out of your imagination, you are, for those magical moments, playing God.—Martin Roth

A news story is supposed to be true, but otherwise the criteria for what makes a good story are the same as in fiction. We look for strong characters (newsmakers), good dialogue (soundbites/quotations), and something novel and dramatic to tell (scandal/disaster/victory). We strive to somehow touch our audience by relating things in personal terms. And we try to present it in a way that will attract and hold someone’s attention.—Dennis Stauffer

SWEEPSTAKES

Sweepstakes will improve results by 50% or more.—Dick Benson

TABLOID COPY

Use simple words everybody knows, then everyone will understand—Winston Churchill

Low culture makes big money. Got to remember that! There is your audience. There is the language. There are the words that they use.—Eugene Schwartz

For all their lofty pretenses, today’s mainstream media are essentially just another branch of show biz. The tabloidists understand this at a time when most journalists either didn’t or would admit it.—Bill Sloan

The longer the sentence, the less the reader will get out of it. The more short words, the more the reader will get out of it.—Rudolph Flesch

Denials can sometimes be just as juicy as accusations—Bill Sloan

Short words are best and the old words when short are the best of all.—Winston Churchill

Whatever claim you use to gain attention, the advertising should tell a story reasonably complete.—Claude Hopkins

TAKEAWAY SELLING

All too often, copywriters are so busy extolling the virtues of their product, they fail to add what the readers will be missing if they don't take advantage of an opportunity.—Richard Hodgson

TEASER COPY

The outer envelope is the headline of direct mail.—Ed Nash

A white envelope is hard to beat. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try to beat it, because if your envelope doesn't get opened, your package doesn't get read.—Malcolm Decker

Your outer envelope is where your prospect decides whether to stop, look and listen. It's the come-on—the headline on the ad, the dust jacket on the book, the display window outside the store, the hot pants on the hooker.—Denny Hatch

TESTIMONIALS

Every type of advertiser has the same problem: to be believed. The mail-order man knows nothing so potent for this purpose as the testimonial, yet the general advertiser seldom uses it.—James Webb Young

Proof—What the followers have to have before they can make a decision.—Earl Nightingale

What others say about you and your product, service, or business is at least 1,000 times more convincing than what you say, even if you are 2,000 times more eloquent.—Dan Kennedy

I have yet to find one business—not one—where testimonials as proof hasn't substantially improved sales.—Dan Kennedy

A person will desire any object so long as he is convinced that it is desired by another person whom he admires.—Rene Girard

TESTING

Never test big, if you can test small.—Jay Abraham

Drawing broad conclusions from your testing can be hazardous to your financial health.—Mark Joyner

Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted, and the trouble is I don't know which half—John Wanamaker

When mailings are tested with and without a letter, those with no letter almost always lose.—Denny Hatch

There are two rules—and two rules only—in direct marketing. Rule 1: Test everything. Rule 2: See Rule 1.—Dick Benson

We learn the principles and prove them by repeated test.—Claude Hopkins

Good direct marketers constantly test against their control to develop still stronger promotions, or replacements when the old control begins to slip.—Joan Throckmorton

THE RIGHT WORD

A powerful agent is the right word. Whenever we come upon one of those intensely right words in a book or a newspaper, the resulting effect is physical as well as spiritual, and electrically prompt.—Mark Twain

Like magicians with their props, or fisherman with their time-tested lures, advertising copywriters rely upon a handy assortment of contrivances for seducing an audience. A copywriter's tools are words, and the most effective tools are words that sell.—Richard Bayan

If you read Hemingway, you will notice the effectiveness of a maximum of thought and a minimum of words.—Earl Nightingale

A man who uses a great many words to express his meaning is like a bad marksman who instead of aiming a single stone at an object takes up a handful and throws at it in hopes he may hit.—Samuel Johnson

I can say with confidence that what motivated you to buy was the power of words. Somehow words were presented to you in a precise order required to get you to reach into your pocket and shell out hard earned money for this course.—Mark Joyner

Nothing is ever bartered, traded or sold without words.—Nick Usborne

Syllables govern the world.—John Selden

Writing is easy, all you have to do is cross out the wrong words.—Mark Twain

Nearly all first drafts are verbose, awkward and disconnected.—Frances Lester Warner

Writing good copy is like running a 440-yard dash in a track meet. If you don't keep up the pace on the backstretch you will fall back with the pack. And if you don't have a finishing sprint left, you will surely lose the race.—Max Ross

If you can't state it, your prospect won't see it—Jay Abraham

All words are pegs to hang ideas on.—Henry Ward Beecher

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.—Thomas Jefferson

Language is the operating system of the mind. No word is ever accepted on its own merit. Every sound, every syllable, carries its own baggage, which is sometimes positive, sometimes negative, sometimes neutral. IF you want to create a favorable impression in the mind, you have to use words that reflect the perception you are trying to create.—Al Ries & Laura Ries

Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind.—Rudyard Kipling

A word is like a key. When a Word unlocks the correct stored memories, it is meaningful.—Stephen Kosslyn

TIMING

The difference between lettuce and garbage is timing.—Joe Polish

TOLL-FREE NUMBER

The basic reason for an 800 number is to solicit incremental orders that would not have been generated without this marketing motivator.—Allan Caplan

As a rule, at least twice as many people will respond to an 800 number in an advertisement as will call a regular telephone number—all other factors being equal.—Nat Bodian

TRUST

No asset has greater worth than the trust of a customer—J.C. Penney

I have encountered many people who wish to deceive, but no one who wishes to be deceived.—St. Augustine

Studies have shown that the number one element lacking that keeps people from buying anything is trust.—Joe Vitale

Without sincerity, you're selling air—Joe Vitale

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

The greatness of art is not to find what is common, but what is unique.—Isaac Bashevis Singer

Why should I do business with you, above any and all other options, including doing nothing, or whatever I'm doing now?—Dan Kennedy

You must offer something truly unique, that prompts the response from a prospect, “Really, how do you do that???”—Dan Kennedy

If you must take a stand and be known for something, what will you be known for?—Roy Williams

A lion survives by being a lion, and a mouse, by being a mouse.—Martin Landau (in The Rounders)

The “key to the vault” in marketing in general and in this tough medium in specific is a message that differentiates you from all your competitors in a positive, appealing, preferably compelling way.—Dan Kennedy

A USP can be based on just about anything: price, product ingredient, positioning. There are USP's based on color, size, scent, celebrity endorsement, location, hours of operation, and on and on.—Dan Kennedy

When someone's main reason as to why customers should do business with them is low price, it's because they haven't determined anything else that is more unique.—Joe Polish

UNSOLICITED ADVICE

Unsolicited advice is the junk mail of life.—Bern Williams

Most of the things that go wrong in life happen when your mouth is open.—Joe Gibbs

USING CLICHES

A cliché is a truth one doesn't believe.—Bernard Taper

VERISIMILITUDE

The cornerstone of successful direct response copy isn't truth, but having the reader regard what you write as truth.—Herschell Gordon Lewis

Consistency prevents the buildup of skepticism, which erodes verisimilitude.—Herschell Gordon Lewis

Theories are private property, but truth is common stock.—Charles Caleb Cotton

The greatest thing to be achieved in advertising, in my opinion is believability, and nothing is more believable than the product itself.—Leo Burnett

Every type of advertiser has the same problem: To be believed.—James Webb Young

WANTS VS. NEEDS

If we went into stores only when we needed to buy something, and if once there we bought only what we needed, the economy would collapse—Boom!—Paco Underhill

Yes, I sell people things they don't need. I can't however, sell them something they don't want. Even with advertising. Even if I were of a mind to.—John O'Toole

WHAT TO OMIT

If it doesn't sell don't say it—David Ogilvy

For our purposes, the definition of “stupid” is that which hinders sales—Gary Halbert

Every time we get creative, we lose money.—Ed McCabe

No matter what you're selling, a price has no meaning until readers know what they're getting.—Jeffrey Dobkin

WHILE THEY'RE HOT

Believe it or not, the prospect most likely to respond to your offer is the one who just responded to your last promotion.—Robert Bly

There are always thousands of people on the verge of buying a car, held back by some secret condition.—E.B. White

It takes a wise doctor to know when not to prescribe.—Baltasar Gracian

WORD OF MOUTH ADVERTISING

Word-of-mouth advertising is created when people talk about things that have impressed them deeply—whether positive or negative.—Roy Williams

Forget about market surveys and analyst reports. Word of mouth is probably the most powerful form of communication in the business world. It can either hurt a company's reputation...or give it a boost in the market.—Regis McKenna

Do something extra and unexpected.—Jerry Wilson

Positive word-of-mouth marketing is generated, built and sustained, not on a single gigantic activity, but on a thousand little things done well, day in a day in and day out.—Jerry Wilson

YELLOW PAGE ADVICE

Just because somebody can sell advertising media does not mean they have any wisdom whatsoever about selling with advertising. Feel free to cheerfully ignore every iota of

advice and consternation given you by Yellow Pages rep and instead, use every smidgen of space and pack your ad with copy that sells.—Dan Kennedy

Remember it generally takes about fifteen seconds to decide on a dentist—and fifteen years to find out whether the choice was the right one. As a result, most people feel that talking to friends, relatives, and colleagues is a better way to choose that dentist than looking through the yellow pages for the largest ad.—Godfrey Harris

The Yellow Pages are like the weekend jogger, thudding along with no particular goal in mind. They're a service directory for shoppers who have no preference; when people don't know who to call, they pull out the Yellow Pages.

“YOU” COPY

People come alive when communication focuses on them rather than you. —Patricia Yudkin

Bottom-line, we pay attention to ads when they're important to us.—Bruce Bendinger

Everything that is written merely to please the author is worthless.—Blaise Pascal

What is the most powerful word in advertising? Not “free!” It's “you.”—Eugene Schwartz

If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as from your own.—Henry Ford

Average writers position the listener as an uninvolved bystander. Good writers position the listener as an interested observer. Great writers involve the listener as an active participant.—Roy Williams